GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1055
ANSWERED ON:02.03.2016
Radiation Caused by Towers
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken note that electromagnetic radioactive waves emitted from the mobile telephone towers particularly those installed in thickly populated areas cause health hazard to humans, birds and domestic animals;
(b) if so, the details of the types of health hazards likely to be caused by the radioactivity of the mobile towers;
(c) whether the Ministry has issued any guidelines with reference to the installation of Telecom Towers in residential colonies and if so, the details thereof;
(d) whether the Ministry has set any Base Trans receiver Station Norms for installation of mobile telephone towers and if so, the level of radiation activity permitted therein;
(e) if so, whether the urban/rural local bodies are entitled to direct the removal of the mobile telephone towers; and
(f) whether the Ministry has in its possession the list of mobile telephone towers directed to be removed by the courts and the amount of penalties imposed on telecom service providers?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) & (b) Madam, an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) to examine the effect of Electro Magnetic Field (EMF) Radiation from base stations and mobile phones was constituted on 24.08.2010. In its report, the committee has, inter-alia, referred to studies conducted by certain institutes in India. Further, the IMC in its report, after examining various national and international studies on the environmental and health related concerns due to EMF, has indicated that most of the laboratory studies were unable to find a direct link between exposure to radio frequency radiation and health; and the scientific studies as yet have not been able to confirm a cause and effect relationship between radio frequency radiation and health.

In a Writ Petition filed in Hon'ble High Court Allahabad, Lucknow bench, the Hon'ble Court vide its order dated 10.01.2012 constituted a committee including Members from IITs Kharagpur, Kanpur, Delhi, Roorkee, Bombay and from other scientific institutions of the country including Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) Delhi who submitted its Report on 17-01-2014. The Committee in their report has, inter-alia, noted − " ...there are no conclusive evidence to establish any causal link between the effect of EMF radiation from BTS with biological effects described in cell models, animals or humans, and any possible resulting health effects." The Committee has also quoted studies conducted by World Health Organizations (WHO) and has noted − "In the area of biological effects and medical applications of non-ionizing radiation approximately 25,000 articles have been published over the past 30 years. Despite the feeling of some people that more research needs to be done, scientific knowledge in this area is now more extensive than for most chemicals. Based on a recent in-depth review of the scientific literature, the WHO concluded that current evidence does not confirm the existence of any health consequences from exposure to low level electromagnetic fields....".

The main conclusion from the WHO reviews is that EMF exposures below the limits recommended in the International Commission on Non Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) international guidelines do not appear to have any known consequence on health. In India, norms for exposure limit for the Radio Frequency Field (Base Station Emissions) are already 10 times more stringent than the safe limits prescribed by ICNIRP and recommended by WHO. Making the norms ten times stricter than what has been prescribed by ICNIRP and recommended by WHO, obviates the need for having separate norms for special localities like schools, hospitals and residential areas. Further, Government of India has taken adequate steps to ensure that Telecommunications Service Providers strictly adhere to these prescribed norms.

(c) & (d) DoT, has issued advisory guidelines to state governments on 01.08.2013 for issue of clearance for installation of mobile towers. These guidelines to State Governments are applicable to all areas including residential areas. These guidelines do not place any restriction on installation of mobile towers in public buildings/places such as residential colonies/ thickly populated areas.

The present permissible limit of radiation from mobile towers in India for antennae (Base Station) electromagnetic frequency (EMF) emissions for general public exposure are as follows:
<pre>
Frequency Range E-Field Strength (Volt/Meter) H-Field Strength (Amp/Meter) Power Density (Watt/Sq.Meter)
400MHz to 2000MHz 0.434f Â½ 0.0011f Â½ f/2000
2GHz to 300GHz 19.29 0.05 1
</pre>
(f = frequency in MHz)
(e) & (f) Regulating the EMF radiation from Base Transceiver Stations (BTSs) installed at the mobile towers is a telegraph related

activity and powers to make rules for the conduct of telegraphs has been conferred on Central Government under section 7 of Indian Telegraph Act, 1885. However, before installation of tower, the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) have to obtain necessary right of way related clearances from concerned local authorities/ State Government bodies also. Various local bodies/State Government have formulated their own policy regarding grant of such permissions for installation of mobile towers. DoT does not maintain the information about grant of such permissions by State Government bodies / Local authorities or about their removal because of directions of Courts. However, as per the policy of DoT, in case any BTS site is found to violate the prescribed EMF norms, actions are taken to put a penalty of Rs. 10 lakh per BTS per incidence including closing of BTS site, if the violation persists. As on 31.12.2015, a total penalty of Rupees 10,80,00,000/- have been imposed by DoT on the BTSs that were in violation of EMF norms.